DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 532 CE 067 379

AUTHOR Fisher, Teresa A.; Griggs, Mildred B.
TITLE Factors That Influence the Career Development of African-American and Latino Youth.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 44p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Youth; Career Choice; *Career Development; College Students; *Community Influence; Higher Education; *Hispanic Americans; *Parent Influence; Qualitative Research; *School Role; Student Attitudes; Success
IDENTIFIERS *African Americans; Latinos

ABSTRACT

A study examined the personal, social, and institutional factors that facilitated the career development and career choice of 11 African-American and 9 Latino juniors and seniors (12 females and 8 males) who were attending a large Midwest university and who had successfully identified and acted on their vocational plans. The students had all volunteered for the study and had maintained college grade point averages of B or better. The students participated in informal semistructured interviews focusing on retrospective factors that affected their career development/choice. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed in a three-phase analysis performed by four coders. Goal orientation and strong self-confidence were cited as major success factors by 95% and 85% of the students, respectively. Other important factors were as follows: influence of role models at home and school, desire to be a role model, challenging high school curriculum or extensive college preparatory program, and internships/work experience. The importance of efforts to develop and sustain minority students' personal/academic confidence before college, sustain their parental support, provide them with a variety of role models in a variety of contexts, and use critical life events as learning experiences to help shape their career development were emphasized. (Contains 47 references.) (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 380 532

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND LATINO YOUTH

Teresa A. Fisher, University of Rochester

Mildred B. Griggs, University of Illinois

(Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, April, 1994, New Orleans)

Contents of this paper should not be copied without expressed permission from the author.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T Fisher

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE067379

Abstract

This study was designed to explore the personal, social and institutional factors which facilitated the career development and choice of successful minority students. Twenty retrospective interviews were conducted with a select group of African-American and Latino undergraduates, who had chosen careers and were making considerable progress toward achieving them. Qualitative analysis revealed key themes within the contextual domains of self, home school and community. Results suggest that in order to enhance career decisions among minority students, efforts must be made to sustain parental support, and to develop personal/academic confidence prior to college. This study adds to the existing literature by emphasizing the need for role models in a variety of contexts and the importance of utilizing critical events as learning experiences to help shape students' career development. A model that stipulates further research is presented.

Factors That Ifluence the Career Development of African-American and Latino Youth

Career development theories derived from the research on predominantly white middle class individuals, (hereafter referred to as majority or dominant) have often been used to describe the career patterns of minorities (racial/ethnic groups in the United States). It has often been assumed that the factors which predict the career development and selection of majority students, are applicable predictors for minority students as well. This has created a limited and misguided view of the constructs that shape the career profiles of minority students. The increasing number of diverse groups entering the work force makes it crucial to acquire a clear understanding of how minorities develop their career identity, which includes work values, knowledge of occupations, perception of career options and career decision making strategies. In order for this to occur, more investigations must be directed toward examining the unique influences that one's culture and ethnicity can

have on the career development process.

The few studies that have encompassed minority career issues have used survey research to assess how well minorities fit the majority career identity profile in regards to career maturity, work values and attitudes, occupational aspirations/expectations, and vocational self-concept. Results reveal that there are distinct differences among culture groups in the types of factors that predict their respective career development patterns (Johnson, 1992; Baly, 1989; Wilson, 1987; Schulenberg, 1984; Kerchoff & Campbell, 1977; Portes & Wilson, 1976; Smith, 1983). Career development profiles of the dominant culture tend to be influenced by objective factors (i.e. SES, intelligence quotient, family occupational status), while the career development of minorities are influenced more by subjective indicators (i.e. personal efficacy, educational aspirations, perception of opportunity structure, significant other influence and support).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the subjective influences on the career development and choice for a select group of African-American and Latino undergraduates, who had chosen careers and were making considerable progress toward achieving them. This study was designed to give the students an opportunity to reflect on the significant personal, social, and

institutional factors which facilitated or hindered their career selection. These students who were on successful career paths, offered a rich source of information concerning how others can overcome career development obstacles. The major contextual domains explored were self, home, school and community. These have long been identified as important social/environmental domains in career decision making (Kotrlik and Harrison, 1989; Birk & Blimline, 1984; Eaddy, 1986; Falk, 1980; Johnson, 1987; June & Fooks, 1980; Lungstrom, 1973). In addition, the researchers believed these areas would present situations ideal for applied interventions. For instance, a clearer insight into how career choices are influenced can provide direction for motivating Blacks and Latinos into occupational areas (i.e. science, math) in which minorities are presently under-represented (Astin, 1982; Manese & Fretz, 1985).

Many researchers have advanced theories that effect career decision making however, Krumboltz's (1990) social learning approach has had the most impact on the design of this study. Krumboltz's social learning theory of career development builds on the work of Bandura, (1977). His guiding premise is that behaviors are largely influenced by the social learning experiences one derives from environmental conditions and events.

Social learning theory recognizes four major

categories of factors that influence one's career decisions: (1) genetic endowment and special abilities, (educational and career opportunities due to such factors as race, sex, or physical characteristics); (2) environmental conditions and events, (situations that are typically not in anyone's control, i.e. sociopolitical issues, economic decisions, availability of natural resources); (3) history of learning experiences, (nature of learning- observations, reinforcements, associations) (4) task approach skills, (interactions among experiences, genetic predisposition and environmental factors, form the behaviors one uses to respond to situations- standards of performance, work habits, emotions, perceptions and cognitions). Krumboltz's social learning theory, not only served as a guide, but was also viewed with scrutiny. It was believed that results from this study might be used in modifying the theory, to make it more appropriate for explaining the career development of minority students. Below is a brief overview of the research findings on the major contextual domains explored in this study.

Self, Home, School and Community Influences on Career Development

Among these four major influences on career choice, the **self** domain is the most elusive and incomplete. The most frequently cited "self" attributions have been

categorized as interests (Kotrlik & Harrison, 1989; Hager & Elton, 1991), goal setting (Florida State Department of Education, 1988) motivation (Moore, 1983) and work values (Poole, 1983). There is indication that minorities view their personal involvement in career selection differently than individuals from the majority group (Malveaux, 1989; Baly, 1989; Boykin, 1986 June & Fooks, 1980; Dillard & Perrin, 1980). Current research results show that minority students may be more external in their attributions for career decisions as compared to the majority population.

Research that has examined **home** variables and their relationship to career choice, has been heavily concentrated on either family structural variables (i.e. family size, birth order, two vs one parent households) or process-oriented features of the family (i.e. parental employment status, transference of work values) (Schulenberg & al, 1984; Dornbusch & al, 1991; Datcher, 1982; Heatherington & al, 1983). Unfortunately, the influence of family interaction styles on career decisions has been virtually ignored by researchers. Preliminary evidence indicates that the career choice patterns of minority youth, are less effected by the structural and process oriented factors within families than they are by the strength of supportive family networks that provide subtle as well as obvious advice,

mentoring relationships and positive home environments (Johnson, 1992; Wilson & Allen, 1987; Epstein, 1989; Debord & al 1977; Portes and Wilson, 1976). Family relationship patterns may prove to have a significant influence on the career choices of minority college students.

Numerous variables in **school** settings which influence career decisions, have been identified. Research findings have established significant relationships between career choice and one's high school curriculum, extra-curricular activities, teacher expectations, and academic self-concept (Florida State Department of Education, 1988; Lucas & al, 1990; Moses & al, 1990; Educational Testing Service, 1989; Owens, 1992).

In spite of all the research findings on career decision making and school related variables, it is not clear how the variables impact the decision making process of minority students. There is some indication that they may effect minorities and majority students differently. For example, minority students tend to discuss career plans more frequently with school counselors than majority students, and are more eager to utilize teachers, counselors and peers as role models (Mallinckrodt, 1988; Moore, 1983).

The research focusing on **community** factors and their

relationship to career choice is very scarce. This is partly due to the fact that most of the existing work is indirectly associated to career development. For example, researchers have investigated the impact of community based mentoring programs on college attendance (Florida State Department of Education, 1988; Crain & Mahard, 1978). Evidence reveals that such programs are beneficial in helping students internalize the value of a college degree. Other research in this area have examined the relationship of academic performance and community composition as measured by level of education, amount of income and ethnic make-up. Such studies indicate that community components differentially effect white and minority students. White students' school performance appears to be influenced by individual family income, whereas minority students are effected more by the average level of income in the community (Dornbusch & al, 1991; Datcher, 1982).

It is evident that additional exploration is needed to obtain a better understanding of the direct connection between these variables and career decision-making. Previous studies have been successful in characterizing self, home school and community as vehicles that can foster career development, but limited in their ability to explain exactly how career choices are supported, encouraged and maintained among minority students.

Method

Participants

Data for this study came from twenty junior and senior level students attending a large Midwest university. They volunteered for the project, after one of the investigators made a formal appeal for subjects to the summer intern/mentoring program in which they were enrolled. The students were chosen to participate in this internship program because they showed some interest in graduate study, had identified and acted on their vocational plans, desired to work with a mentor in their chosen profession, and earned a B or better college grade point average. Their career goals represented a wide variety of occupational areas including teaching, engineering, business, journalism, science, medicine, law, psychology and agriculture. Although, these students had not entered their chosen profession, they had made career decisions and were enrolled in academic programs in preparation for that profession.

Twenty students, twelve female and eight male, between 19 and 21 years of age participated in this study. Nine of the participants, (three female and six male) were Latino. Eleven respondents (nine females and two males) were African American. All participants grew

up and attended secondary school in large northern or Midwestern cities.

Data Collection Procedures

The major source of data were informal semi-structured interviews focused on retrospective factors that impacted the students' career development and choice (Spradley, 1979). The researchers believed this was the best method to ascertain in depth descriptions and interpretations of experiences that they perceived to have significantly influenced their career decisions. Furthermore, in order to better comprehend the career development process of minority undergraduates, they must first describe the experiences in their own words. The following research questions guided the interview procedure: (a) What factors have contributed to student's career development and choice? (probes in regards to self, home, school and community were included when necessary); (b) What do student's see as obstacles to one's career development? ((c) What suggestions do students offer that can help others with their academic/career decisions?. When field tested, these questions along with their appropriate probes, successfully elicited variables which students believed were important contributions to their career development. The question on "suggestions for others", was included to help them prioritize key factors they believed were

essential for successful career development and choice. Student responses regarding "obstacles to career development" gave the researchers insight into influences that were considered to be crucial components of a student's career development, without which one could be at a grave disadvantage. The students had ample time and probes which enabled them to recall and reflect on influences in their environment.

Tape recorded interviews were conducted in small university classrooms. Each interview was approximately 40 minutes to one hour in length.

Additional information from the participants was acquired from written questionnaires, which were completed prior to the interview. This form included questions on personal data (i.e. birthdate, ethnicity, etc).

Data Analysis

Twenty interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The interview data underwent a three phase analysis procedure performed by four coders. Phase I consisted of examining the responses to the three major research questions (see section on data collection) for similar patterns (Fetterman, 1989).

Each reader reviewed the transcripts separately and convened to discuss their categories. The majority of categories were identical. Consensus was used to

identify eleven categories, contextual variables which were believed to enhance or hinder one's career decision. In order to check the appropriateness of the categories as well as their clarity, each reader was asked to write summary response statements under each category. This was done for each transcript using all categories that applied. The agreement in summary statements among the reviewers, suggested that the selected categories were appropriate as well as exhaustive for all respondents (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Once the patterns and categories were clearly identified, phase II began by establishing themes among the various responses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Reviewers individually used the (agreed upon) response summaries to identify themes under each contextual category. Again, the reviewers discussed themes and reached consensus in a very short time. For coding efficiency, the readers agreed to condense the eleven contextual categories to four, each having their own sub-categories.

Phase III involved complete coding of all transcripts by the four readers. A random selection of coded transcripts during the initial segment of this phase, revealed inter-rater reliability coefficients that ranged from .92 to 1.0. Disagreements were easily resolved and a final coding format was devised.

Results

Table I presents an example of the initial analysis, summary profiles. A profile was compiled for each participant based on their responses to the three major research questions. There were eleven categories, each representing a contextual domain. Definitions of the categories are listed, and summary responses for one of the participants are included in the cells.

Insert Table I about here

After obtaining a clear understanding of the individual profiles, which contained the students' interpretation of their experiences, we organized the categories into four contextual domains, and developed themes. Table II introduces the new categories: (1) personal attributes (formerly academic self-concept, personal attitudes, personal revelation); (2) home (parents, siblings, relatives); (3) school (teachers/counselors, peers); (4) community (work experience). The accompanying sub-categories are included on the table, which consist of the individual or program responsible for the influential activity. The

themes and their definitions are also included. Responses to the questions regarding contributions to career development and suggestions the students have for others, were almost identical. Because of this, the responses were combined to help form the contribution themes (see table II).

Percentages under each theme reflect how responses were distributed across categories regarding students identification of factors which influenced their career development and choice. Students often specified more than one contribution, therefore the percentage sums across categories are more than 100%.

Insert Table II about here

This next section reports the experiences that participants identified as contributing to their career direction. The student's own words are used to emphasize their experiences as well as to give the reader a better understanding of the themes. The contextual categories were examined for gender and ethnic differences. The researchers believed the sample was too small to analyze response differences by career choice. Each contextual category and accompanying sub-category will be introduced, followed by theme descriptions and appropriate student quotes.

Personal Attributes

This category did not yield any significant differences between males and females or ethnic groups. Although the Latino students appeared to favor this category slightly more than African-Americans, there was not a preference for a specific thematic domain. Out of the five themes that are included in this category, students attributed the majority of their career influence to two of them, goal orientation and self-confidence. These areas were identified by 95% and 85% of the students respectively.

Self-confidence was a strong component for many students. They saw themselves as achievers, doers, capable of success. In addition, being able to establish a goal or focus was the most widespread perception the students had about themselves and their success. They had become one with the goal, which gave them a clear vision of the path to follow. As one student reveals:

> "...I learned that if you want to obtain anything in this society or the world in general, you just have to be focused on what you have to do." "...this view has helped me, because I knew I couldn't depend on a bunch of other people to always help me out when I needed assistance." "...I was going to have to

do it myself."

Beliefs were cited by 40% of the respondents as factors which influenced their career development. These beliefs originated from a variety of sources, family, religion, and one's personal reflections as a result of life experiences.

Student beliefs also included perceptions of how society viewed women and minorities. Stereotypical beliefs and constraints placed on women and minorities by society were often used as a catalyst for accomplishing academic and career goals. This was articulated in the following excerpt:

> "I went to a sexist high school. It was an all girl school and the male teachers didn't believe that women should be engineers or doctors or anything of that nature. " "...We were taught to be home economic majors, and marry rich men. This means I had to work harder in my college science courses than many of my peers. I expect that the road will not be easy, (as I pursue a career) but nothing has come easy for me".

Expounding upon personal contributions to career choice, another theme was revealed, **"interests"**. Many of

the students (60%) interviewed had been motivated by their personal interests in certain areas for instance, math, science, or sheer enjoyment of learning.

The aspect of **role model** was one of the major factors cited frequently as having motivated and influenced the respondents in the process of academic achievement and career development. Two distinct types of role modeling emerged from the responses: (a) desire to be a role model for others; and (b) significant others demonstrating that goals can be accomplished (i.e. parents, relatives, teachers/counselors, peers).

The Desire to be a Role Model is one of the unique factors cited by 50% of the students as contributing to their career development. They wanted successful careers to demonstrate to siblings as well as to society at large, that minorities can have significant accomplishments. The impact the students plan to have on their community, is reflected in the following quote:

> "I would really like to work back in my community, where there are many minority students, predominantly Mexican-American students. I would like to go back and not only serve as a role model but to motivate them that yes, you can do this. Exposing them to information that I did not have while I was in high school could

be very beneficial."

Influenced by Role Models at Home. In this case, respondents expressed how important it was for their career development to have parents and relatives who demonstrate that anything is achievable or can be done. The following is illustrative of the important role model function:

> "My father has always been self-employed. He is highly educated and has managed to establish big enterprises. He owns a farm and a refrigeration business. He worked hard for long hours and I have never witnessed him being given orders on a job. Instead, he was always directing others. He served as my role model and I aspire to be like him," (managing my own businesses.)

Role models at School. Similar to the home environment, students identified influential role models in the school setting. In this instance, teachers/counselors and peers took on this function. During the interviews, students spoke very explicitly about having role models in school:

> "My 8th grade teacher was excellent. Up

> until that time, school was boring and I was never challenged. I did extremely well on the typical activities ... she opened up new doors for me and created new and innovative ways of doing things. That's when I decided to pursue teaching, ...I wanted to change how the class-room atmosphere is conducted."

Home

The Home category primarily encompasses all close family relationships that were in the same household (i.e. parents, siblings and other relatives). There were a few respondents who identified relatives outside the home as instrumental in their career selection. The students' responses illuminated the fact that parents and relatives served similar functions, as indicated by the repetitive themes in both of the sub-categories (see Table II). Parents were typically identified as playing a stronger role than relatives in terms of their overall support.

Females were twice as likely as males to recognize this category as being influential. The parental support theme, had the largest gender discrepancy, with females specifying this theme to a greater degree. In regards to

ethnicity, African-Americans had a tendency to select home themes slightly more frequently than Latinos.

Supportive. The parental support theme which included interaction styles and strategies of encouragement, proved to be a strong unifying element. The only student who did not state that he/she had supportive parents did acknowledge that non-supportive parents would be an obstacle to achieving one's career goals. In effect, all students interviewed did believe that parental support was a major factor in career development. They specifically agreed upon the beneficial impact of parents who had high expectations, and had the ability to provide and reinforce opportunities for career interests to develop and grow.

There was no differentiation made about the importance of support from the various types of family structures. That is, fathers were as supportive as mothers and single parents were just as supportive as two parent families, sometimes even more specific and directed in their attempts to help their child succeed. The following quote typifies such a contribution:

> "My mother who was single was very influential. This is contrary to the current societal belief that only those who are raised by both parents can make it. My mom had to work extra

> hard in order to make sure that I had those values instilled into me where I wouldn't just go out and do whatever. She also had other people to turn to for advice. By watching my mom, I realized that single parenthood is not the problem, but a lack of strong parents.
>
> A strong willed parent is going to know what to do or when to go somewhere to talk to other parents for their input. My mother took an active interest in what I was doing... She made it clear that she was always going to be there and that school was a priority."

Critical Events . Critical events were unexpected situations which affected the students directly or indirectly, but nevertheless played a vital role in their career development. The most vivid events cited were unusual circumstances such as sudden death of a family member, severe illness or close friends encountering drug addiction. Interestingly enough, respondents indicated that their observations of peers influenced them to avoid similar calamities, and often gave them a stronger desire to have future success. The following quote addresses the impact of critical events:

> My father and sister had high blood pressure. My

sister had a stroke when she was 21 and the doctor informed her that she was eating the wrong foods. My grandmother is diabetic, although she is as thin as a toothpick (I always thought that diabetes was something that affected people who were overweight). My family's health problems affected me so much that I really wanted to find out how I could help people with similar problems.

School

High school was an important context for students to receive guidance toward their careers. Individual relationships as well as aspects of the curriculum were highlighted. This category did not have any major differences between gender or ethnic groups, although there was a tendency for females to identify the school themes (teacher/counselor, curriculum, etc.) as contributing to their career choice more than males.

Students valued the teachers, counselors and peers for their **support** as well as their **role modeling** function (as mentioned earlier). Many of the students interviewed cited specific school relationships throughout their educational careers that had a positive impact on them. Following is the typical sentiment expressed by the respondents:

"...I think if I hadn't met my third

> grade teacher, If she hadn't taken some special interest in me. I might have gone down a totally different path."
>
> "...when I find a teacher that really wants to teach me something, wants me to learn something in class, I put forth more effort."

Curriculum and Extra-curricular. Fifty-five percent of the respondents said that a challenging high school curriculum or extensive college preparatory program motivated them toward their career direction. While seventy percent attributed it to the relevance of the academic program. The criteria that made a course relevant for career decisions varied across students. The dominant components consisted of teacher flexibility, opportunity to explore interests in an informal format, and utilization of student input.

An engineering student discusses the motivating aspect of courses that stimulate one's intellect:

> I was one of the few people selected from my school to receive an honors biology course prior to high school. Programs like this helped to inspire my desire to excel. This happened again during high school, when I had the opportunity to take a college level engineering

> course. I was ecstatic to find out that I could do very well in a college course, prior to graduating from high school. I found the class very interesting, in fact it accelerated my interest and aptitude in the field of engineering.

Several of the students interviewed believed their extra-curricular activities at school either provided them with leadership skills or an opportunity to be exposed to a variety of experiences. Both of which, helped them gain a stronger focus on their career choice.

Community

Many students experienced the value between the opportunity to observe various forms of employment, talking to someone in the community and one's future career. While there were no significant ethnic or gender differences in student responses for this category, female respondents identified more frequently than males the benefits of work experiences (i.e. internships/apprenticeships). Internships that were acquired before and during college were considered to be a crucial component of the community's influence.

A large percent (40%) of the students believed their career decisions were enhanced by significant others in

the community, who served as support figures and/or as role models.

Discussion and Conclusions

It's not surprising that being goal oriented and confident were the key personal attributes addressed when students reflected on their career development influences. These results support a preliminary study by Ward (1992) who investigated the career values of college students and found that having a strong goal orientation contributed significantly to one's career selection. The findings are also in line with a longitudinal study conducted on Latino undergraduates which concluded that early career decisions were attributed to the students' strong self confidence (Educational Testing Service, 1989).

These results suggest that in order to enhance career decisions among minority students, efforts must be made to develop and sustain their personal/academic confidence prior to college. It is feasible to believe that being goal oriented and confident, allows students to remain focused in spite of pending obstacles in the immediate environment.

Parental support was mentioned by all of the respondents as a key ingredient for their career development process. The most beneficial parenting

components identified in this study were the following: reinforcing the desire to learn, providing opportunities for career interests to develop and grow, and maintaining high expectations. While these styles are supportive of existing research, this study also extends the importance of parental influence on career development to the college-age population. Most of the work on parental influence has been conducted with elementary and secondary students examining their impact on academic performance (Wilson & Allen, 1987; Johnson, 1992; Epstein, 1989).

The personal relationships identified in the school setting as well as the benefits of relevant curricular and extra-curricular activities were all supportive of previous research examining the impact of school on career decisions (Kotrlik & Harrison, 1989; Hale-Benson, 1989; Parham & Parham, 1989). One of the more interesting findings indirectly supports some of the research on teachers. Several studies have revealed that teachers believe that minority females adjust better to the demands of school than minority males. Females in this retrospective study, indicate more so than males, that school related factors were instrumental for their career direction. Perhaps closer attention should be paid to our educators to ensure that educational support systems are equitable across gender and ethnicity.

As students reflected on their community's influence toward career development, it was evident that internship experiences played a major role in helping students develop their interest and skills. Many of the students believed that internship programs should be started as early as high school, as a means to keep students motivated and continuing their educational/career journey. Significant others from the community (i.e. pastor, youth program director) were often chosen as role models with or without their consent. These models were very beneficial especially for students who didn't have anyone to mentor in other areas of their life. The results in this study support other work focusing on the impact of role models. For instance, Ganschow (1970) observed that Mexican-Americans who interacted with social models from their own ethnic group, scored higher on measures of occupational interests than students without exposure to social models.

Two of the most interesting aspects of these findings is the importance attached to having a role model in a variety of contexts (i.e. personal, home, school, community), and critical events. Most studies that discuss the benefits of a role model relationship refer to it as occurring in one setting. The students in this study were very clear about their view of role model for each context. For the personal domain, the students

perceived themselves as role models which sustained their inner drive to succeed in their chosen profession. While most college students concentrate on their individual achievements and goals, several of the students in this study were concerned about how they can give back to their community. Role models at home (parents, relatives, siblings) often provided the first exposure to occupations as well as the encouragement to pursue their career goals. The counselors and teachers who served as role models at school, gave them the necessary support for career exploration and direction. Role models found in the community at large were frequently utilized when students needed a different experience than what could be provided for at home or school. Furthermore, they were more likely to find someone in their area of career interest. These results support the need for mentoring opportunities in numerous settings, in order for minority students to develop and maintain their career direction (Noddings, 1989).

The other unique component uncovered in this study was the role of critical events. These unexpected situations were identified in the home and school contexts by over half of the students. Critical events were not only helpful for contributing to career decisions, but frequently instrumental for helping

students overcome career obstacles. The respondents were uninhibited in discussing how their vicarious experiences taught them how to maneuver obstacles that could be detrimental to their future career success.

This exploratory study clearly identified some of the subjective factors which influenced the career development and choice of African-American and Latino college students. The results paint a picture of the student's career choice being a function of individual characteristics interacting and molded by experiences at home, school and surrounding community. All of which are impacted by the social, cultural and historical milieu.

Insert Fig.1 about here

This model designed to initiate further research, has been heavily influenced by Krumboltz's social learning theory of career development (see discussion of theory in introduction). All of the components indicated in the research model can be absorbed by the four major assumptions of the social learning theory. The diagram (fig. 1) demonstrates the feasibility of this theory for understanding minority career development if researchers clearly delineate the key factors for each specific population. For example this study identified two key issues that would need to be explained by the theory to

make it more comprehensible, critical events and role models in various contexts.

Although this study was exploratory in nature we hope the results will stimulate further research. Investigations are needed that will give us a clear understanding of the type of support systems minority students need in order to develop and maintain high academic and personal competence as well as a strong goal orientation. More information is necessary about the role modeling relationship. For instance, what are the key characteristics for an effective role model?; should the mentoring relationship be established for a minimum amount of time?; and what are the best strategies for establishing role models in homes, schools and communities? Should minority students be encouraged to think of themselves as role models? If so, what implications does this potential strength or obligation have on their career identity? Finally, how can the critical events students encounter, be used as a positive force (i.e. learning experience) in their career development?

Tentative as they are, it is hoped the explanations drawn from this study, have deepened our understanding of the variables which can influence the career development of African-American and Latino undergraduates.

TABLE 1

Major Questions and Categories: A Sample Summary Profile by Student

Contextual Categories	What Factors Have Contributed to the Students' Career Choice?	What Suggestions Do Students Offer That Can Help With Career Decisions?	What Do Students See as Obstacles to One's Career Choice?
Academic self-concept	-Academic subjects were very easy, i.e. math	-Have good study habits -Don't let outside factors interfere	
Personal attitudes (Beliefs)	-Education a top priority -Optimistic outlook	-Be disciplined -Focused - set goals -Practice optimism	-Lack of discipline, motivation, and determination
Personal revelation	-Accounting seems so practical	-Identify strengths and weaknesses -Choose something you really like	
*Parents	-M-influential, supportive, best friend		
*Siblings	-B-Supportive, always there		
*Peers	-Encouraging friend		
*Teacher/Educator		-Talk to professionals and Cs	
School	-Love of math and numbers -Took 2 years accounting -Opportunities for good schools	-Take courses you like or want to learn more about	-Only a few Cs are helpful -Inadequate high school
Work Experience	-Worked in CPA firm for 13 months		
Community	-Close family friend	-Go out and talk to people - network -Go to career services offices	-Teen pregnancy
Other		-Start by eliminating careers -Read books	

Note: A = Administrator; C = Counselor; T = Teacher; M = Mother; F = Father; B = Brother; S = Sister; GP = Grandparent

Academic Self-Concept: perception of one's ability to succeed in school, acknowledgement regarding the significance of learning capabilities/accomplishments.

Personal Attitudes: general (worldly) beliefs, personal strengths.

Personal Revelations: beliefs about self that affect career choices, interests.

*Personal Relationships: significant interactions with parents, siblings, peers, educators (i.e., teacher, counselors).

School: factors outside of school personnel (i.e. type of high school, general curriculum, specific courses).

Work: full or part-time work, internship experiences.

Community: perceived influence from community individuals, groups or organizations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE II

CONTEXTUAL CATEGORIES AND THEMES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Contextual Categories, Setting/ Context	Sub-Categories, Individual/ Program	Experiences Contribution Themes
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	Self (student)	-Self-confident (various areas of competence - academic, self-esteem, positive attitude (always know or felt) 85% -Goal oriented (focused, disciplined (study habits), determined, general plan, initiative, strategies (help seeking behavior) 95% -Beliefs (Societal constraints, faith, perceptions, values) 40% -Role model for others (desire to show it can be done) 50% -Interest (long term attraction to skill) 60%
HOME	Parents	-Supportive [a] (encouraging, helpful, advise, high expectations, reinforcing, autonomy support, provide opportunities, exposure to different lifestyles) 95% -Role models (someone to look up to, demonstrate that it can be done) 45% -Critical events (unusual circumstances; i.e. death, illness, trial) 40%
	Relatives (siblings, extended family members)	-Supportive [a] 25% -Role models [b] 15% -Critical events (same as parental category) 10%
SCHOOL	Teacher/ Counselor	-Supportive [a] 60% -Role models [b] 45%
	Curriculum	-Academically challenging (Reach potential, options available) 55% -Relevant Programs 70%
	Extra-curricular	-Leadership (opportunity to try out new ideas) 15% -Exposure to wide range of opportunities 45%
	Peer	-Supportive [a] 40% -Role models [b] 10% -Critical events(s) (vicariously learning what not to do, i.e., drugs) 25%
COMMUNITY	Significant Others (Pastor, Youth Director)	-Supportive [a] 45% -Role models [a] (someone to look up to, demonstrate that it can be done) 40%
	Work Experience	-Identify interest/skills/information 55%

Note [a] Supportive means the same characteristics in all circumstances.
[b] Same description as parental category

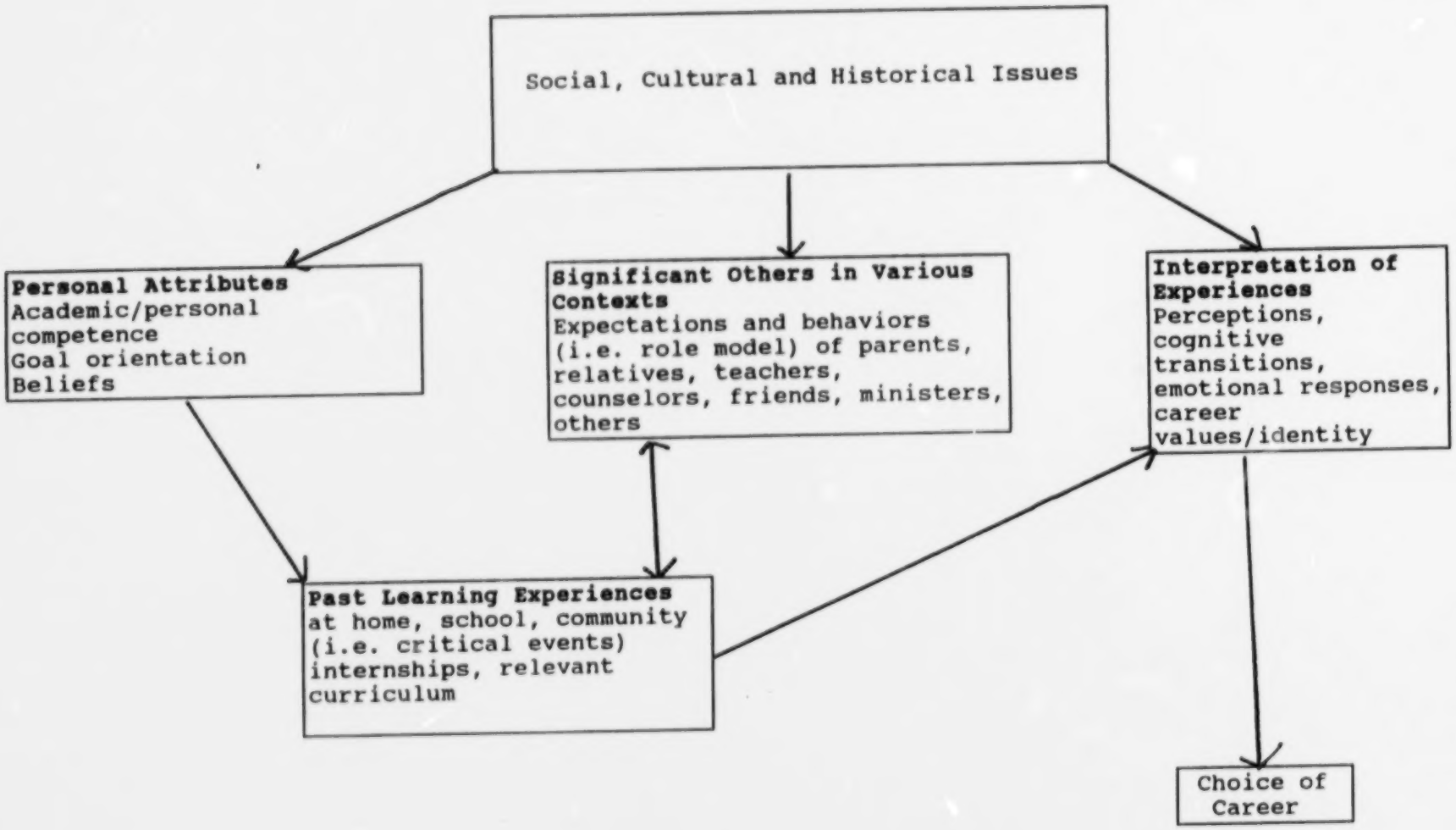
Social, Cultural and Historical Issues
Personal Attributes
Academic/personal competence
Goal orientation
Beliefs
Significant Others in Various Contexts
Expectations and behaviors (i.e. role model) of parents, relatives, teachers, counselors, friends, ministers, others
Interpretation of Experiences
Perceptions, cognitive transitions, emotional responses, career values/identity
Past Learning Experiences
at home, school, community (i.e. critical events) internships, relevant curriculum
Choice of Career

Figure 1 Research Model of Contextual Relationships and Career Choice

References

Astin, A. (1982). Minorities in American higher education; Recent trends, current prospects and recommendations, (First Edition). San Francisco: Josey- Bass.

Baly, I. (1989). Career and vocational development of Black youth. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), Black Adolescents (P.249-265). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84, (2), 191-215.

Birk, J., & Blimline, C. (1984). Parents as career development facilitators: An untapped resource of the counselor. School Counselor, 31, 310-317.

Bogdan,R. & Biklen,S. (1992). Qualitative research for education. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Borman, C. & Colson, S. (1984). Mentoring: An effective career guidance technique. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 32 (3), 192-7.

Boykin, A. W. (1986). The triple quandry and the schooling of Afro-American children. In U. Neisser (Ed.), The school achievement of minority children: New perspectives (p. 57-92). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Crain,R. & Mahard, R. (1978). School racial composition and Black college attendance and achievement test performance. Sociology of Education, 51, (2), 81-101.

Datcher, L. (1982). Effects of community and family background on achievement. Review of Economics and Statistics. 64, 32-41.

Debord, L. Griffin, L., & Clark, M. (1977). Race and sex influences in the schooling process of rural and small town youth. Sociology of Education. 50, 85-102.

Dillard, J. & Perrin, D. (1980). Puerto Rican ,Black and Anglo adolescents career aspirations and maturity. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly. 28, 313-321.

Dornbusch, S. Ritter, P. & Steinberg, L. (1991). Community influences on the relation of family statuses to adolescent school performance: Differences between African-Americans and Non-Hispanic whites. American Journal of Education. 543-41.

Eaddy, V. (1986). The influence of selected factors on the vocational choices of vocational agriculture students in Louisiana. Baton rouge: Louisiana State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 047 132).

Educational Testing Service (1989). High Achieving Hispanic Students. ETS Policy Notes, V.1, n1-3, (ERIC Document No. 338 632).

Epstein, J., (1989). Family structures and student motivation: A developmental perspective. In C. Ames (Ed.), Research on Motivation in Education, (Vol.3). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Falk, W. (1980). "Significant other" influence and vocational development. Research in Education Information Series No. 196. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service N. ED 186 759).

Fetterman, D. (1987). Ethnographic educational evaluation. In G. Spindler & L. Spindler (Eds.), Interpretive ethnography of education. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Florida State Department of Education (1988). College reach-out conference: A summary of the proceedings of the annual meeting. (ERIC Document ED 309 663).

Ganschow, L. (1970). Stimulating educational information seeking and changes in student attitude toward vocational education by videotape and film presentations. (Final Report). Washington, D.C: Office of Education, Bureau of Research.

Hager, P. & Elton, C. (1991). The vocational interests of Black males. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 1, (2), 153-158.

Hale-Benson, J. (1989). The school learning environment and academic success. In G. Berry & J. Asamen (Eds.), Black students: Physchosocial issues and academic achievement. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Heatherington, E.M., Camara, K. and Feathermen,D. (1983). Achievement and intellectual fuctioning of children in one-parent households. In J. Spence (Ed.) Achievement and Achievement Motives:Psychological and sociological approaches. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Johnson, F. C. (1987). Factors influencing enrollment in a vocationally oriented course: Perceptions of students and teachers. Home Economics Research Journal, 16, (1). 56-56.

Johnson, S.T. (1992). Extra-school factors in achievement, attainment, and aspiration among junior and senior high school-age African-American youth. Journal of Negro Education, 61, (1), 99-119.

June, L. & Fooks, G. (1980). Key influences on the career directions and choices of Black university professionals. Journal of Non-white Concerns in Personnel Guidance. 8, (3). 157-166.

Kerchoff, A., & Campbell, R. (1977). Race and social status differences in the explanation of educational ambition. Social Forces, 55, 701-714.

Kotrlik, J., & Harrison, B. (1989). Career decision patterns of high school seniors in Louisiana. Journal of Educational Research, 14 (2) 47-65.

Krumboltz, J. (1990). Social learning theory of career development. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (Eds.), Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice (2nd ed.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lucas, T., Henze, R., & Donato, R. (1990). Promoting the success of Latino language-minority students: An exploratory study of six high schools. Harvard Educational Review, 60, (3), 315-340.

Lungstrom, R. M. (1973). Selected factors related to occupational preference of high school students enrolled in vocational education programs in the Wichita public schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 074 257)

Mallinckrodt, B. (1989). Student retention, social support and dropout intention: Comparison of Black and white students. Journal of College and Student Development, 29, 60-64.

Malveaux, J. (1989). Transitions: The Black adolescent and the labor market. In R. L. Jones (Ed.) The Black adolescent. (P. 267-289). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.

Manese, J., & Fretz, B. (1984). Relationship between Black students' racial identity attitudes and vocational exploration. Paper presented at the Annual convention of the American Psychological Association, (Toronto, Canada, August 24-28).

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1984). Qualitative data analysis. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Moore, B. (1983). Factors that influence the career choices of rural minority students. Cooperative State Research Service Bulletin, No. 31. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service. ED 242 805).

Moses, R., Kamii, M., McAllister, S. & Howard, J. (1989). The algebra project: Organizing in the spirit of Ella. Harvard Educational Review, 59, (4), 27-47.

Noddings,N. (1989). Developing models of caring in the professions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (San Francisco, CA. March, 27-31, 1989).

Owens,T. (1992). Where do we go from here? Post high school choices of American men. Youth and Society, 23, 452-77.

Parham, W., & Parham, T. (1989). The community and academic achievement. In G. Berry and J. Asamen (Eds.), Black students: Psychosocial issues and academic achievement. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Poole, M. (1983). Job choice and advice. The Vocational Aspect of Education,35, (90) 23-29.

Portes,A. & Wilson, K. (1976) Black-White differences in educational attainment. American Sociological Review, 41 (3), 414-431.

Schulenberg, J., Vondracek, F., & Crouter, A. (1984). The influence of the family on vocational development. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 129-141.

Smith, E. (1983). Issues in racial minorities' career behavior. In W. Walsh & S. Osipow (Eds.), Handbook of vocational psychology (Vol. 1). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1990). Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1990. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, Department of Commerce.

Wiley, E. (1990). Mentor programs successful in minority retention. Black Issues in Higher Education.

Wilson, K.R. & Allen, W. R. (1987). Explaining the educational attainment of young Black adults: Critical familial and extra-familial influences. Jounral of Negro Education, 56 (1), 64-76.